BLACK POP SONGWRITING 1963–1966: AN ANALYSIS OF U.S. TOP FORTY HITS BY COOKE, MAYFIELD, STEVENSON, ROBINSON, AND HOLLAND-DOZIER-HOLLAND

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Black songwriter-performers such as Fats Domino, Little Richard, and Chuck Berry achieved success on the U.S. pop charts[1] as leading contributors to the development of 1950s rock and roll. Rock and roll's impact had waned by the late 1950s, however, and white songwriter-producers dominated the creation of U.S. pop hits. Many of the successful songwriters from this period have been referred to as "Brill Building" composers—so named after a building (located at 1619 Broadway in New York) that first housed music publishers during the Great Depression. Successful writers and writing teams (e.g., Don Kirsher/Al Nevins, Jerry Leiber/Mike Stoller, Doc Pomas/Mort Shuman, Carole King/Gerry Goffin, Barry Mann/Cynthia Weil, and Phil Spector) created material for a wide range of artists (including male and female soloists, duos, and girl groups). They typically functioned as producers as well as songwriters,

1. *Billboard* began publishing a weekly U.S. national pop chart in 1940. The first *Billboard* "Top 100" chart was published in 1955, and the "Hot 100" chart (typically used as the music industry's primary source for singles chart data) commenced in 1958. This article draws on Whitburn's (1987) summary of *Billboard* chart information. Hesbacher et al. (1975a, 1975b) examine the procedures involved in compiling pop chart information; although they identify some shortcomings, they describe the *Billboard* charts as "a vast data source that both historians and social scientists should continue to use" (1975a, 14).

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and some went on to form influential record companies such as Aldon (Kirshner/Nevins), Redbird (Leiber/Stoller), and Philles (Spector/Sill).[2]

Betrock (1982, 38) describes the Brill Building sound as emanating "from the stretch along Broadway between 49th and 53rd streets." He also provides a sense of the frenetic activity of the New York pop scene: "You could write a song there, or make the rounds of publishers with one until someone bought it. Then you could go to another floor and get a quick arrangement, . . . get some copies run off, . . . book an hour at one of the demo studios, . . . round up some musicians and singers, . . . and finally cut a demo of the song" (39).

The dominance of writer-producers meant that black performers of the day (like their white counterparts) depended largely on these professional writers to supply them with potential pop-chart hits.[3] For example, Leiber/Stoller provided material for the Coasters and the Drifters, Goffin/King created hits for the Drifters, Shirelles, Cookies, and Little Eva, while Mann/Weil's artist roster included the Drifters and Crystals.

The first sign of a new "crossover" breakthrough into the pop charts for black songwriters came in the late 1950s, in the form of hits by Sam Cooke and Curtis Mayfield. Described by Reed (2003, 89–90) as "the first widely-celebrated professional gospel singer to seek a secular career," Cooke achieved a number-one U.S. Top Forty hit in 1957 with "You Send Me." By 1963, he had a total of eighteen Top Forty entries (many self-penned). Mayfield's first U.S Top Forty hit was "For Your Precious Love" (written for Jerry Butler in 1958). He followed this up with a series of hits for artists such as Jerry Butler, the Impressions, and Major Lance.

During the early 1960s, black songwriters associated with the Motown label joined Cooke and Mayfield on the pop charts. The Motown Record Corporation (together with Jobete Music Publishing Company) was created by Berry Gordy in 1959. Gordy had previously operated an unsuccessful jazz record shop (from 1953 to 1955), eventually receiving some financial rewards by writing songs for Jackie Wilson. Gordy was convinced by William "Smokey" Robinson (whom he met in 1957) that "the way to really make it was to stop leasing records to others and to begin marketing and merchandising their music themselves" (Robinson, cited in George 1985, 27).

Motown released its first song in mid-1959, and by 1961, the company had produced a number-one R&B hit (and number-two pop hit) with "Shop Around," written by Robinson and performed by the Miracles. With an increasing roster of performing artists, an established core of spe-

2. Shaw (1992) provides an overview of Brill Building artists and record companies.

3. At this time, writer-performers were a rarity. Exceptions included Roy Orbison and Del Shannon.

cialist session players, and talented and ambitious young writer-producers, the company soon achieved considerable pop-chart success, ultimately becoming "the largest independent label and the largest black-owned business in America of the 1960s" (Kooijman 2006, 123). Smokey Robinson and the team of Brian Holland, Lamont Dozier, and Eddie Holland (Holland-Dozier-Holland, hereafter referred to as H-D-H) were Motown's main songwriters, and they monopolized the production of pop hit songs for the company. A&R director William Stevenson also (co)wrote a number of early hits for the label.

By 1963, then, black songwriters were achieving unprecedented pop-chart success.[4] Table 1 lists the number of U.S. Top Forty hits by the most successful black pop songwriters of 1963–1966.[5] It demonstrates that Motown's impressive chart achievements coincided with Curtis Mayfield's most prolific period as a pop writer while simultaneously overlapping with the final phase of Sam Cooke's career.

It might be expected that the successful black songwriters listed in Table 1 brought some new elements into the pop "mainstream," and various writers have indeed attempted to describe the distinctive nature of the new black pop music. McEwen and Miller (1992, 279), for example, speak of the "gospel-pop fusion" of Berry Gordy's early songs and suggest that H-D-H "exploited gospelish vocal gestures in a pop context" (281). Heilbut (1985, 76) argues that "Motown soul is equally shot through with [gospel] quartet influences," while McEwen (1992, 76) colorfully describes Sam Cooke's pop music as "the place where soul and feeling of gospel meets the finger-snapping, ascot-wearing ambience of supper club pop."

These types of generalized assessments provide some sense of the new black pop music, but any attempt to define the specific musical and lyrical characteristics of the crossover songs needs to be grounded in a detailed examination of the repertoire. I aim here to contribute to the literature surrounding black pop songwriting by (a) documenting the

4. Brackett (2005, 75–76) rightly draws attention to the "fluid" nature of music industry categories, commenting that "the music categories of 'popular,' 'R&B,' and 'country' each encompass genre labels that emerge in other media contexts, all of which are in a perpetual state of transformation." Nevertheless, Table 1 signals the beginnings of unprecedented exposure for black pop songs. Jerry Wexler describes Motown's achievements, for example, as "something you would have to say on paper was impossible. They took black music and beamed it directly to the white American teenager" (Guralnick 1991, 2).

5. Table 1 includes all black songwriters with eight or more U.S. Top Forty hits 1963–1966. Influential black songwriters James Brown and Norman Whitfield had both begun to achieve some pop-chart success during the period under consideration, but their most prolific and influential period came later. (Brown, for example, had thirty-four Top Forty hits between 1967 and 1974 [Whitburn, 1987].)

Table 1. U.S. Top Forty hits by the most successful black songwriters, 1963–1966 (Whitburn 1987)

	1963	*1964*	*1965*	*1966*	*Total*
Holland-Dozier-Holland	7	8	8	12	35
Robinson	5	5	9	4	23
Mayfield	5	6	4	1	16
Stevenson	2	2	3	2	9
Cooke	1	3	4	0	8

results of musical and textual analysis of all of the songs from Table 1 and by (b) drawing on these results to reflect on the trajectory and significance of the early 1960s crossover phenomenon. The present work reflects my belief that musical and textual analysis can play an important role in providing data to inform historians and theorists as they attempt to formulate a comprehensive account of the development of popular music. As Keightley (1991, 5) suggests: "[T]heoretical overviews and textual instantations are necessary and ongoing parts of the study of popular culture. They are complementary, not opposite; one approach should not dominate to the detriment of the other."

Brief Biographies of Cooke, Mayfield, Robinson, H-D-H, and Stevenson

Sam Cooke (1935–1964) was born in Chicago and began singing gospel music from age nine, first with the Singing Children and subsequently with the Highway QCs. He joined the Soul Stirrers in 1950 and recorded for Specialty Records. In 1956, he began to record secular songs. "You Send Me" (1957) was the first in a lengthy series of pop hits. Cooke formed his own record label (Sar), which rereleased gospel-influenced R&B hits, and he joined RCA as a solo artist in 1960, negotiating a new contract that afforded him considerable artistic control. He recorded his own songs, as well as songs by other writers, until his death in 1964. Several of his songs continued to appear on the pop charts in 1965.

Curtis Mayfield (1942–1999), also born in Chicago, sang with his cousins in the Northern Jubilees (which included Jerry Butler, for whom Mayfield wrote many of his early songs). Mayfield's strongest early musical influence was gospel, but by the mid-1950s, he was also listening to R&B and rock and roll. He became especially interested in the music of the Coasters. Mayfield formed the Impressions in 1957 with Butler, who subsequently left to pursue a solo career (with Mayfield as guitarist and songwriter). Mayfield continued to write and perform with the

Impressions and also supplied pop songs for solo artists such as Major Lance and Gene Chandler. He formed his own independent record company (Curtom Records) in 1969.

Born in Detroit, Smokey Robinson (b. 1940) studied saxophone from an early age and sang in a church choir. He formed a high school group (the Matadors) that included Ronnie White, Bobby Rogers, Warren Moore, and Robinson's future wife, Claudette Rogers. They performed original songs, mostly written by Robinson. At his audition for Gordy in 1957, Robinson told him that he had already written over one hundred songs. Gordy offered Robinson advice about songwriting and suggested that the Matadors change their name to the Miracles. Between 1959 and 1975, the Miracles had forty-six U.S. Top 100 songs (mostly written and produced by Robinson). Robinson also wrote numerous songs for other Motown performers, including the Temptations, Mary Wells, and Marvin Gaye.

Another Detroit native, Eddie Holland (b. 1939) joined Berry Gordy's publishing company as a singer. He tended to imitate the vocal style of Jackie Wilson and achieved some minor success on both the R&B and pop charts. A nervous and reluctant performer, he decided that he was better suited to studio work.[6] After observing the financial rewards his brother Brian was obtaining from songwriting, he asked him if they could work together. When Brian Holland (b. 1941) was sixteen, he met Gordy, who encouraged him to compose melodies to lyrics. Holland became involved with studio production by writing and producing songs for Motown's first girl group, the Marvelettes, and worked with a number of partners, including William Stevenson, Robert Bateman, Freddie Gorman, and Lamont Dozier.

Also from Detroit, Lamont Dozier (b. 1941) first recorded at age fifteen with the Romeos. He moved to New York and worked outside of the music industry until his return to Detroit in 1958. As Lamont Anthony, he recorded for Motown and began to write songs with Brian Holland. In 1962, Brian Holland, Eddie Holland, and Lamont Dozier began to work as a songwriting/production team, and by 1963, they were achieving substantial success. They worked together at Motown until 1968 and composed a large number of pop hits for many of Motown's most successful groups, such as the Supremes and Four Tops.

William Stevenson began recording R&B and gospel music in the mid-1950s and tried to obtain support from Detroit businessmen, doctors, and lawyers for a black record company. George (1985, 37) observes that these people "weren't interested in entering what they saw as the hustling,

6. George (1985, 40) describes Holland as a "dull" and "frightened" performer, whose decision to abandon performing was influenced by a "rough experience before the Apollo Theatre's notoriously demanding audience."

unsavory world of black show business." Berry Gordy knew of Stevenson's support for black music and offered him the position as A&R director at Motown. Stevenson encouraged the use of jazz musicians for Motown sessions and also wrote and produced a number of hits for the company.

Top Forty Hits by Cooke, Mayfield, Robinson, H-D-H, and Stevenson: 1963–1966

Tables 2–6 list the U.S. Top Forty hits by Cooke, Mayfield, Robinson, H-D-H, and Stevenson between 1963 and 1966. Eleven songs performed by Cooke reached the Top Forty between 1963 and 1965. He wrote seven of these (see Table 2). In addition, the Animals (one of the British blues bands that followed the Beatles' 1964 "invasion" of the U.S. charts) achieved a hit in 1965 with a cover of Cooke's "Bring It on Home to Me." Mayfield achieved consistent chart success during the years 1963 to 1965 and wrote an even balance of songs for his own group (the Impressions) and for other performers (all male soloists).

Robinson functioned both as writer-performer (as lead singer of the Miracles) and professional songwriter, supplying songs for other Motown artists. Apart from composing several songs for Mary Wells, he wrote mainly for male performers, establishing a particularly productive partnership with the Temptations and Marvin Gaye. Although several members of the Miracles regularly received credit as cowriters with Robinson, Robinson was seemingly the primary creative force within the various writing partnerships.[7] He usually bore total responsibility for lyrics and major responsibility for the musical elements, receiving only occasional assistance with aspects such as the creation of melodies and guitar riffs. Consequently, the songs involving Robinson as both sole and joint writer are considered collectively.

H-D-H functioned exclusively as professional songwriters and composed songs for a large number of Motown performers, both male and female. They wrote primarily for groups—especially the Supremes, Four Tops, and Martha and the Vandellas.

William Stevenson cowrote and produced eight songs for a variety of Motown performers. Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels, for example, covered "Devil with a Blue Dress On"—originally written for Motown performer Shorty Long.

7. In his autobiography, Robinson (1989, 169) explains, "For years I'd tried to supplement the Miracles' income by having them help me compose. If they worked a writing session with me—whether I used their ideas or not—I put their names on the tunes and, consequently, they enjoyed extra earnings."

Table 2. U.S. Top Forty hits by Sam Cook, 1963–1966 (Whitburn 1987)

Year	*Performer*	*Song Title*
1963	Cooke	Another Saturday Night
1964	Cooke	Good News
	Cooke	Good Times
	Cooke	Cousin of Mine
1965	Cooke	Shake
	Cooke	A Change Is Gonna Come
	Animals	Bring It on Home to Me
	Cooke	Sugar Dumpling
1966	—	—

Table 3. U.S. Top Forty Hits by Curtis Mayfield, 1963–1966 (Whitburn 1987)

Year	*Performer*	*Song Title*
1963	Jan Bradley	Mama Didn't Lie
	Major Lance	The Monkey Time
	Impressions	It's All Right
	Major Lance	Hey Little Girl
	Jerry Butler	Need to Belong
1964	Major Lance	Um, Um, Um, Um, Um, Um
	Impressions	Talking about My Baby
	Impressions	I'm So Proud
	Impressions	Keep on Pushing
	Impressions	You Must Believe Me
	Major Lance	Rhythm
1965	Impressions	People Get Ready
	Major Lance	Come See
	Impressions	Woman's Got Soul
	Gene Chandler	Nothing Can Stop Me
1966	Impressions	You've Been Cheatin'

Song Analysis

Lyrics

An overview of the lyric content of the songs analyzed here shows that lyrics relating to aspects of relationships are in a clear majority (see Table 7).[8] Cooke, Mayfield, Robinson, and Stevenson favor either positive or ambivalent sentiments, while H-D-H's songs deal much more frequently with negative sentiments. Faithfulness is a topic of common concern to all

8. Recordings of all songs from Table 2 to 6 were analyzed and data entered in a database.

Table 4. U.S. Top Forty hits by Smokey Robinson, 1963–1966. Cowriters: (B) J. Bradford, (M) W. Moore, (Mi) Miracles, (R) R. Rogers, (T) M. Tarplin, (W) R. White (Whitburn 1987)

Year	*Performer*	*Song Title*
1963	Miracles (Mi)	You've Really Got a Hold on Me
	Mary Wells	Laughing Boy
	Miracles	A Love She Can Count On
	Mary Wells (B)	Your Old Standby
	Mary Wells	What's Easy for Two Is So Hard for One
1964	Temptations (R)	The Way You Do the Things You Do
	Mary Wells	My Guy
	Temptations	I'll Be in Trouble
	Miracles (T)	I Like It Like That
	Miracles (R, M)	That's What Love Is Made Of
1965	Temptations (W)	My Girl
	Marvin Gaye (M, T)	I'll Be Doggone
	Miracles (M)	Ooo Baby Baby
	Temptations (M)	It's Growing
	Miracles (M,T)	The Tracks of My Tears
	Temptations (M)	Since I Lost My Baby
	Marvin Gaye (M, R, T)	Ain't That Peculiar
	Miracles (M, T, W)	My Girl Has Gone
	Temptations (M, R)	My Baby
1966	Miracles (M, R, T)	Going to a Go-Go
	Marvelettes	Don't Mess with Bill
	Marvin Gaye (M, R, T, W)	One More Heartache
	Temptations	Get Ready

Various authors (e.g., Hennion 1983, 163; Moore 1993, 32) have stressed the importance of considering the sound recording as musical text. Recordings were original 1960s versions of the songs obtained from a variety of sources (including specialist retail outlets, radio stations, private collections, and the sound recording archives at Bowling Green State University). Recent CD compilations were avoided, since record companies tend to remaster (even remix) the originals. Original transcriptions were used to facilitate some of the analytical calculations entered in to the database. Sheet music (if available) was avoided since it usually differs significantly from the recorded version of the song. As Nettl (1983, 48) has noted, "circumscribing, defining, or enumerating the content of a music is indeed difficult," and music analysts have suggested a wide range of possible parameters that may provide a broad analysis of musical texts. In the present study, I grouped parameters into six common areas: lyrics, melody, rhythm, harmony, form, and production. A comparable amount of analytical data was sought within each area.

Table 5. U.S. Top Forty Hits by Holland-Dozier-Holland, 1963–1966 (Whitburn 1987)

Year	*Performer*	*Song Title*
1963	Martha and the Vandellas	Come and Get These Memories
	Martha and the Vandellas	Heat Wave
	Miracles	Mickey's Monkey
	Mary Wells	You Lost the Sweetest Boy
	Marvin Gaye	Can I Get a Witness
	Martha and the Vandellas	Quicksand
	Supremes	When the Lovelight Starts Shining through His Eyes
1964	Miracles	I Gotta Dance to Keep from Cryin'
	Marvin Gaye	You're a Wonderful One
	Supremes	Where Did Our Love Go
	Four Tops	Baby I Need Your Lovin'
	Supremes	Baby Love
	Marvin Gaye	Baby Don't You Do It
	Supremes	Come See about Me
	Marvin Gaye	How Sweet It Is to Be Loved by You
1965	Supremes	Stop in the Name of Love
	Martha and the Vandellas	Nowhere to Run
	Supremes	Back in My Arms Again
	Four Tops	I Can't Help Myself
	Four Tops	It's the Same Old Song
	Supremes	Nothing but Heartaches
	Supremes	I Hear a Symphony
	Four Tops	Something about You
1966	Supremes	My World Is Empty Without You
	Four Tops	Shake Me, Wake Me (When It's Over)
	Isley Brothers	This Old Heart of Mine (Is Weak for You)
	Supremes	Love Is Like an Itching in My Heart
	Jr. Walker and the All Stars	(I'm a) Roadrunner
	Supremes	You Can't Hurry Love
	Jr. Walker and the All Stars	How Sweet It Is to Be Loved by You

Table 5, cont.

Four Tops	Reach Out I'll Be There
Supremes	You Keep Me Hangin' On
Martha and the Vandellas	I'm Ready for Love
Miracles	(Come Round Here) I'm the One You Need
Four Tops	Standing in the Shadows of Love

writers, but H-D-H more often address the anguish associated with relationship difficulties or the ending of a relationship. Many song titles (e.g., "Where Did Our Love Go," "You Lost the Sweetest Boy," "Standing in the Shadows of Love") signal this type of lyric content. Such lyrics are designed provide a powerful "feeling" of the song's emotional content, as in this example from "Standing in the Shadows of Love," recorded by the Four Tops: "I want to run, but there's nowhere to go. Because heartache will follow me I know. . . . Standing in the shadows of love. I'm getting ready for the heartaches to come."

The songs by H-D-H also frequently portray a state of dependence on a relationship (often despite indifference or unkindness displayed by a partner). Sentiments of this type are expressed by both males and females. Typical lyrics include the following:

- "Baby love, my baby love, I need you, oh how I need you. But all you do is treat me bad, break my heart and leave me sad." ("Baby Love"—Supremes)
- "Some say it's a sign of weakness for a man to beg. Then weak I'd rather be, if it means having you to keep." ("Baby I Need Your Lovin'"—Four Tops)
- "Set me free why don't you babe. Get out' my life why don't you babe. 'Cause you don't really need me, you just keep me hangin' on." ("You Keep Me Hangin' On"— Supremes)

Mayfield refers explicitly to dancing in five of his sixteen songs ("Come See," "The Monkey Time," "Hey Little Girl," "Rhythm," "It's All Right"). These songs mention popular dances of the day (or those that the song hopes to establish in the dance repertoire) and frequently suggest dance movements. Typical lyrics include:

- "Do the Monkey yeah. Do the Monkey yeah. A-twist them hips, let your backbone slip." ("The Monkey Time"—Major Lance)
- "Come now not later, see the Mashed Potato yeah. My feet go berserk as I do the New York Jerk." ("Come See"—Major Lance)

Table 6. U.S. Top Forty hits by William Stevenson, 1963–1966. Cowriters: (G) M. Gaye, (P) C. Paul, (H) I. Hunter, (W) N. Whitfield, (M) S. Moy, (L) F. Long (Whitburn 1987)

Year	*Performer*	*Song Title*
1963	Marvin Gaye (G,P)	Hitch Hike
	Marvin Gaye (G,W)	Pride and Joy
1964	Martha and the Vandellas (G,H)	Dancing in the Street
	Martha and the Vandellas	Wild One
1965	Four Tops (H)	Ask the Lonely
	Marvelettes (H)	I'll Keep Holding On
	Martha and the Vandellas (H,P)	You've Been in Love Too Long
1966	Martha and the Vandellas (M)	My Baby Loves Me
	Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels (L)	Devil With a Blue Dress On

Social comment is rare within the song field. Those by Mayfield involve symbolic, quasi-spiritual lyrics such as "Look-a look-a look-a yonder, what's that I see? A great big stone wall stands there ahead of me. But I've got my pride and I'll move the wall aside. Keep on pushin'," from "Keep on Pushin'," recorded by the Impressions. Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come" (which entered the Top Forty after his death) uses a similar, quasi-spiritual tone to evoke a sense of the "world-weary" spirit and express a hope for better times: "It's been too hard living but I'm afraid to die, 'cause I don't know what's up there beyond the sky. It's been a long along time coming but I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will."

Although all writers use poetic devices to some extent, Robinson's lyrics are by far the richest and most carefully crafted in this regard, and he regularly creates distinctive and memorable images. A favored technique is the chain of parallel statements, usually involving a device such as simile or metaphor, as in the following example from "The Way You Do the Things You Do," recorded by the Temptations: "You got a smile so bright you know you could've been a candle. I'm holding you so tight you know you could've been a handle. The way you swept me off my feet, you know you could've been a broom. The way you smell so sweet, you know you could've been some perfume." A similar technique involves contrasting, paradoxical images or statements, as in the following examples:

- "I've got sunshine on a cloudy day. When it's cold outside I've got the month of May." ("My Girl"—Temptations)
- "I don't like you but I love you, seems that I'm always thinking of you. Though you treat me badly I love you madly. . . . I don't want you but I need you, don't want to kiss you but I need to." ("You've Really Got a Hold On Me"—Miracles)

Robinson sometimes displays an almost playful approach to lyric creation, using unusual or extensive rhyming passages, as in the following example from "Since I Lost My Baby," recorded by the Temptations: "Next time I'll be kinder. Won't you please help me find her? Someone just remind her of the love she left behind her—'till I find her I'll be tryin' to. Every day I'm more inclined to find her."

H-D-H frequently use short, repeated lyric statements, particularly in choruses. These chorus hooks (e.g., "Baby I Need Your Lovin'," "How Sweet It Is to Be Loved by You," "Nowhere to Run") normally combine a few memorable catchwords, together with a short repeated melodic idea.

While Mayfield's songs are mostly narrative, songs by H-D-H are mostly personal direct-address style. Robinson uses a fairly even balance between the two approaches. Both Cooke and Stevenson favor the narrative style and largely avoid direct address.

Melody

Table 8 provides an overview of the melodic content of the songs. Mayfield uses a more extended vocal range than the other songwriters, regularly using, for example, the male falsetto register for melodic climaxes (e.g., "It's All Right," "I'm So Proud," "Keep on Pushing"). He also demonstrates a marked preference for major pentatonic melodies, using the scale in nine out of ten songs. This scale is also regularly used by Cooke, Robinson, and H-D-H, particularly for melody hooks.

The major hexatonic scale is also used regularly (especially by Cooke), but complete major scales are extremely rare. Robinson makes the most use of the mixolydian mode, while Stevenson regularly creates blues-influenced melodies, using the flattened third scale degree extensively within major keys (and alternating it with the major third), as well as featuring the flattened seventh in prominent locations. H-D-H's melodies also include regular blues inflections.

All of these songwriters show a liking for melodies with flat overall contours (i.e., those that do not rise appreciably in pitch for chorus statements or bridge sections). Mayfield and Cooke make extensive use of arch contours for verse melodies, while the Motown writers clearly favor flat or irregular verse contours. Many of their melodies involve the exten-

Table 8. Melodic content

	Cooke %	*Mayfield* %	*Robinson* %	*H-D-H* %	*Stevenson* %
Vocal range					
Less than octave	14	0	35	29	25
Octave to tenth	71	44	43	56	50
Greater than tenth	14	56	22	15	25
Mode type					
Major pentatonic	29	87	43	38	0
Major hexatonic	43	25	30	26	12
Major (ionian)	14	0	9	3	12
Minor pentatonic	0	0	9	9	0
Mixolydian	0	0	22	12	12
Blues inflections	14	12	4	32	75
Aeolian	0	0	0	9	0
Disjunctive intervals within phrases					
0–5	57	25	52	56	62
6–10	14	25	22	29	37
Greater than 10	29	50	26	15	0

sive reiteration of short melodic statements based on a small range of pitches.

H-D-H's songs often contrast simple, repetitive chorus melodies with longer, more complex verse melodies (e.g., "Baby I Need Your Lovin'," "Standing in the Shadows of Love"), while melodic ornamentation is a feature of many of the pop crossover melodies. Although specific ornamentation may result from the input of the singer rather than the songwriter, the songwriters were usually closely involved in the production process and therefore can be said to have endorsed the ornamentation present on the recordings. In addition, Mayfield and Robinson incorporate ornamentation when performing their own songs, indicating the inherent nature of this element to the crossover hits.

Rhythm

As indicated in Table 9, which provides an overview of the rhythmic content of the songs analyzed here, the largest proportion of songs fall within the range 120–139 beats per minute (bpm), although Robinson demonstrates a preference for slower tempi (more than half of his songs are less than 120 bpm), while H-D-H regularly use fast tempi (one-third of their songs are over 160 bpm).

All writers, apart from Cooke, use straight eighth-note subdivisions more than triplet eighth-note subdivisions (shuffle). But while Mayfield clearly prefers the former, Robinson uses an almost even balance of the two. There is, however, clear evidence that Robinson's songs moved away from a shuffle feel and toward the straight eighth-note feel over time. The songs of 1963 and 1964 are predominantly shuffles (eight of ten songs), whereas those of 1965 and 1966 mostly use straight eighth-note subdivisions (ten of thirteen songs). A similar trend is evident in the songs by H-D-H. Ten of the fifteen songs from 1963 and 1964 employ shuffles, but fifteen of the twenty songs from 1965 and 1966 have a straight eighth-note feel.

The Motown songs normally incorporate a heavy emphasis on beats two and four (backbeat). A large number of instruments (e.g., snare, tambourine, handclaps or finger snaps, brass, and guitars) combine to provide the backbeat emphasis, with guitar parts often displaying a distinctive heavy staccato downpick and a metallic tone. Repeated syncopated rhythmic motives also feature prominently in the songs by all writers except Cooke. Both Mayfield and Robinson make extensive use of the dotted quarter note followed by eighth note (in both shuffle and straight-eighth feels). This motive appears in approximately one in three songs (see Table 10).

Table 9. Rhythmic content

	Cooke %	*Mayfield* %	*Robinson* %	*H-D-H* %	*Stevenson* %
Tempo (beat per min.)					
Less than 100	29	19	17	0	0
100–119	0	12	35	15	37
120–139	14	62	30	50	50
140–159	29	6	9	3	12
160 plus	29	0	9	32	0
Beat subdivision					
Shuffle/triplet eighth	57	31	48	38	25
Straight eighth	43	62	52	53	75
Sixteenth	0	0	0	6	0
Changing subdivision	0	6	0	3	0
Specific features					
Heavy four in bar	0	0	0	15	0
Use of triplets	0	0	4	0	25
Distinct harmonic rhythm	29	68	61	62	62
Sectional rhythm changes	0	44	26	38	25
Riffs					
Overall	0	56	52	68	50
Rhythmic-chordal	0	50	48	47	50
Rhythmic	0	12	4	26	0

Table 10. Songs by Curtis Mayfield and Smokey Robinson featuring the dotted-quarter eighth-note motive (S = shuffle)

Mayfield	*Year*	*Robinson*	*Year*
It's All Right (S)	1963	I Like It Like That (S)	1964
Need to Belong	1963	It's Growing	1965
Talking about My Baby	1964	The Tracks of My Tears	1965
You Must Believe Me	1964	Since I Lost My Baby	1965
Woman's Got Soul (S)	1965	My Girl Has Gone	1965
You've Been Cheatin'	1963	Going to a Go-Go	1966
		Get Ready	1966

On most occasions, the dotted quarter–eighth-note rhythm is associated with one or more repetitive chord progressions and is used as part of rhythmic-chordal riffs—which often act as a structural framework supporting the melodic and lyric development (see "Form/Structure"). Table 10 indicates that while Mayfield employs this technique as early as 1963, Robinson uses it most frequently after 1965.

Songs by H-D-H incorporate a wide variety of repeated rhythmic motives and rhythmic-chordal riffs and use a number of different patterns (see Table 11).[9] Like Robinson, H-D-H make increasing use of these devices over time. By 1966, their songs include several complex syncopated patterns.

All writers except Cooke regularly create distinct harmonic rhythms by attaching syncopated rhythms to chord changes. This often occurs in association with short repeated chord cycles, but they also apply syncopated rhythms to longer chord sequences. Mayfield and H-D-H often associate significant rhythmic changes with sectional changes and/or begin and end riffs at sectional points within songs, providing further evidence of their sensitivity to the rhythmic aspects of song composition. An example of this process occurs in the H-D-H song "When the Lovelight Starts Shining through His Eyes," in which the verse's even eighth-note rhythmic riff contrasts markedly with the chorus's shuffle feel.

Many of the vocal melodies by Mayfield, Robinson, and H-D-H were performed with rhythmic flexibility typical of much African-American popular music. Singers regularly placed notes on either side of the beat and began phrases at different points in the bar, helping to create a sense of rhythmic freedom.

9. This table previously appeared in Fitzgerald (1995a, 6).

Harmony

Table 12 provides an overview of the harmonic content of the songs. The harmonic language used by Cooke and Mayfield is extremely simple. Almost two in three songs use diatonic harmony exclusively, while the remaining songs involve only common secondary-dominant progressions or occasional borrowed or unusual chords. Robinson uses borrowed chords in one in six songs and chord colorations in almost half of

Table 11. Rhythmic motives employed by H-D-H (S = shuffle)

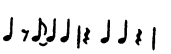
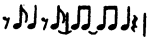
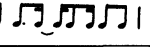
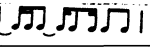
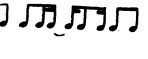
Rhythmic pattern	*Song title*	*Year*
	Heat Wave (S)	1963
	You Lost the Sweetest Boy (S)	1963
	Quicksand (S)	1963
	Shake Me, Wake Me (When It's Over)	1963
	Mickey's Monkey	1963
	When the Lovelight Starts Shining through His Eyes	1963
	I Gotta Dance to Keep from Cryin' (S)	1964
	Baby Don't You Do It	1964
	Come See about Me	1964
	Nowhere to Run	1965
	Back in My Arms Again	1965
	Nothing but Heartaches	1965
	Something about You	1965
	Love Is Like an Itching in My Heart	1966
	Standing in the Shadows of Love	1966
	My World Is Empty without You	1966
	You Can't Hurry Love	1966
	You Keep Me Hangin' On	1966
	I'm Ready for Love	1966

Table 12, cont.

	Cooke %	*Mayfield* %	*Robinson* %	*H-D-H* %	*Stevenson* %
Secondary dominant progressions					
Overall	43	25	35	26	37
II7 V	14	19	17	6	25
III7 vi	14	6	4	6	25
Extended cycle	14	0	9	0	0
Mixolydian progressions					
Overall	14	0	13	18	25
Borrowed/unusual chords					
Overall	0	6	17	41	12
Chord colorations					
Overall	28	19	48	29	37
Major/ minor 6	0	12	9	6	0
Major 7	0	0	22	18	25
Dominant 9/11	14	12	4	3	0
Diminished	14	0	4	3	0

his songs. Almost half of the H-D-H songs are exclusively diatonic, but the remaining songs incorporate a variety of harmonic features (e.g., borrowed chords, modulation between song sections, ambiguity of key center)—representing an increased level of harmonic complexity compared with the songs by the other writers. The songs by Mayfield and H-D-H are notable for their use of extended step bass progressions (see Table 13).

The other diatonic chord progression strongly favored by all writers (apart from Cooke) is the I–IV progression. In many cases, this progression forms part of a repetitive rhythmic-chordal riff (see Table 14), rather than being used to harmonize melodic movement. When used as part of the I–IV riff, the IV chord acts as an embellishment (double appogiatura) of the I chord, and the rhythmic elements of the riff often take aural prominence.

Table 13. Extended step chord sequences in songs by Mayfield (M) and H-D-H

Ascending patterns	*Song*	*Year*
I ii iii	Woman's Got Soul (M)	1965
I ii iii IV	Nothing Can Stop Me (M)	1966
	You've Been Cheating (M)	1966
ii iii IV	Come See about Me (H-D-H)	1964
	I'm So Proud (M)	1964
	Rhythm (M)	1965
ii iii IV V	Come and Get These Memories (H-D-H)	1963
	Heatwave (H-D-H)	1963
	Woman's Got Soul (M)	1965
	I Can't Help Myself (HDH)	1965
iii IV V	The Monkey Time (M)	1963
	You Lost the Sweetest Boy (H-D-H)	1963
Descending patterns		
i VII VI	Standing in the Shadows of Love (H-D-H)	1966
vi V IV	How Sweet It Is to Be Loved by You (H-D-H)	1964
	Stop in the Name of Love (H-D-H)	1965
IV iii ii	Need to Belong (M)	1963
	Baby Love (H-D-H)	1964
IV iii ii I	You Must Believe Me (M)	1964
chord/bass descent	(I'm a) Roadrunner (H-D-H)	1966
	(Come Round Here) I'm the One You Need (H-D-H)	1966

Table 14. Songs with rhythmic-chordal riffs involving the I–IV progression

Composer	*Song*	*Year*
Mayfield	Need to Belong	1963
	Talking about My Baby	1964
	You Must Believe Me	1964
	Come See	1965
	Woman's Got Soul	1965
	Nothing Can Stop Me	1965
Robinson	The Way You Do the Things You Do	1964
	I'll Be in Trouble	1964
	I Like It Like That	1964
	That's What Love Is Made Of	1964
	My Girl	1965
	It's Growing	1965
	The Tracks of My Tears	1965
	My Girl Has Gone	1965
H-D-H	Heatwave	1963
	Mickey's Monkey	1963
	You Lost the Sweetest Boy	1963
	Baby I Need Your Lovin'	1964
	Baby Don't You Do It	1965
	Come See about Me	1965
	Back in My Arms Again	1965
	Nothing but Heartaches	1965

Rhythmic-chordal riffs involving other chord sequences also occur with some frequency. Mayfield, for example, uses the I–ii sequence for riffs in several songs ("You've Been Cheatin'," "The Monkey Time," "Hey Little Girl"), while H-D-H incorporate a wide variety of riff chord sequences. Table 15 provides some examples of some other H-D-H chord sequences.

Sometimes H-D-H make very small adjustments to chord sequences,[10] thereby creating variety within an otherwise highly repetitive framework. "You Lost the Sweetest Boy," for example, reverses the I–IV progression of the verse to make a IV–I progression in the chorus (while maintaining the same rhythmic riff). "Baby Don't You Do It" attaches the rhythm outlined in Table 11 to three alternative chord sequences.

Repeated short chord cycles are also frequently used in songs without notable rhythmic-chordal riffs. This is especially true of the H-D-H songs

10. It is highly likely that the Motown session players also made regular contributions in this area as well (see "Production").

Table 15. Other riff chord sequences used by H-D-H

Chord sequence	*Song*	*Year*
ii V	Reach Out	1966
I IV V	Standing in the Shadows of Love	1966
I v IV I	Nowhere to Run	1965
	Something about You	1965
(I) bVII IV I	Baby Don't You Do It	1964
	Something about You	1965
	You Keep Me Hangin' On (verse section, in C)	1966
(I) v bVII bVI	You Keep Me Hangin' On (chorus section, in A)	1966

(e.g., "You Can't Hurry Love," "Where Did Our Love Go," "I Hear a Symphony," "This Old Heart of Mine"). Chord cycles are often longer when they are not attached to rhythmic riffs. For example, "You Can't Hurry Love" repeats a I–IV–I–iii–vi–IV–V pattern, while "This Old Heart of Mine" cycles I–iii–IV–iii–ii–V).

Form/Structure

Table 16 provides an overview of the form of the songs. The songs by Cooke and Mayfield are very short (between two and two-and-a-half minutes), while Robinson and H-D-H prefer slightly longer durations. The verse-chorus form (with or without bridge) is preferred by all writers, although Stevenson and Robinson use the AABA form regularly. H-D-H's extensive output is notable for the complete avoidance of the AABA form.

Irregular patterns of verses and choruses occur frequently within both Robinson's (one in four songs) and H-D-H's songs (almost one in two songs). H-D-H's "Heat Wave" provides an example of this practice. After proceeding twice through a predictable verse-prehook-chorus sequence, the song continues with two more verse-prehook sections without the chorus, which seems to begin but then fails to continue as anticipated. Some songs, such as "You Can't Hurry Love," introduce previously unheard melodic material over an already established verse or chorus chord progression.

A contributing factor to these more irregular, fluid forms is the presence of riffs that often play an important role in song structure. Although all writers (apart from Cooke) use riffs extensively, H-D-H use them most often (in four in five songs). In addition, as discussed under "Rhythm"

and "Harmony," they use the greatest variety of both rhythmic and chordal patterns in the creation of riffs. It is not surprising, then, that these writers should also be most aware of the structural possibilities of riffs. They regularly use both rhythmic-chordal riffs and general rhythmic changes as structural elements within songs.

The presence or absence of a riff helps differentiate between verse and chorus in some of H-D-H's songs (e.g., "Love Is Like an Itching in My Heart"). At other times (e.g., "Nothing but Heartaches"), two or more different riffs provide verse-chorus contrast. Occasionally, the riff-based structure does not coincide exactly with the lyric/melodic division of verse and chorus but serves instead to provide an element of surprise (e.g., "Come See about Me"). In "Baby Don't You Do It," neither lyrics nor melody provide any clear differentiation between verse and chorus, and so the rhythmic motif and changing chord sequence assume primary importance in defining song sections.

This manipulation of riffs, in combination with regular general rhythmic changes between song sections, allows the writers to create variety within a compositional style that typically involves numerous repetitive elements (e.g., riffs, chord cycles, short recurring lyric and melodic hooks), as well as a relentless and emphatic backbeat.

Another recurring formal element in the songs of H-D-H in particular (and to a lesser extent in the songs of Robinson and Mayfield) is the short, repeated chorus statement. As already noted, this type of chorus consists of a few memorable catchwords, allied to a short and easily recognizable melody. The writers use repetition to reinforce the lyric statement and establish the melody in the listener's mind. Table 17 lists the songs containing this type of chorus, demonstrating H-D-H's particular preference for short statements.

In addition to the songs listed in Table 17, several other H-D-H songs use slightly different techniques to approximate this effect. Both "Heatwave" and "Quicksand" (recorded by Martha and the Vandellas) use repeated hook statements by backing voices, to which the lead voice adds further melodic and lyric ideas. "Nothing but Heartaches" involves a repeated hook followed by further melodic development. Backing vocals are also regularly used to create call-response patterns that play an important role in the black pop crossover songs (see the Production section).

Production

Because Mayfield, Robinson, H-D-H, and Stevenson were writer-producers, studio production can be seen as an integral part of their song cre-

Table 17. Songs by Curtis Mayfield, Smokey Robinson, and H-D-H with short chorus hooks

Composer	*Song*	*Year*
Mayfield	Mama Didn't Lie	1963
	It's All Right	1963
	Um, Um, Um, Um, Um, Um	1964
Robinson	I Like It Like That	1964
	Ooo Baby Baby	1965
	Ain't That Peculiar	1965
	Going to a Go-Go	1966
	Don't Mess with Bill	1966
	Get Ready	
H-D-H	Mickey's Monkey	1963
	You Lost the Sweetest Boy	1963
	Can I Get a Witness	1963
	You're a Wonderful One	1964
	Baby I Need Your Lovin'	1964
	Baby Don't You Do It	1964
	Come See about Me	1964
	How Sweet It Is to Be Loved by You	1964
	Stop in the Name of Love	1965
	Nowhere to Run	1965
	Back in My Arms Again	1965
	My World Is Empty without You	1966
	Shake Me, Wake Me	1966
	Love Is Like an Itching in My Heart	1966
	I'm Ready for Love	1966
	Standing in the Shadows of Love	1966

ation process. Mayfield uses brass instruments in most songs (87%) and favors them for instrumental solo sections. They also use saxophone (57% of songs) and strings (37%) regularly. Robinson uses a similar mixture of brass (83%), saxophone (57%), and strings (35%) but prefers saxophones for solo sections. H-D-H also prefer saxophones for solo sections (41% of songs compared with 6% featuring brass) and use them more extensively overall (79%). Brass instruments are present in 65% of H-D-H's songs and strings in 24%. The baritone saxophone is often used on repeated bass patterns, providing the bass register with a distinctive sonority. As well as piano, both Robinson and H-D-H regularly use the electronic organ and vibraphone in their songs, although the placement of these sounds in the final mix makes it at times difficult to be certain of their

presence in a particular song and therefore to quantify their use reliably. Similarly, handclaps, finger snaps, and tambourines regularly augment the standard drum-kit sounds.

The Motown productions often used a large rhythm section and a regular core of specialist session musicians. Keyboard player Earl Van Dyke describes the situation as follows:

> In most rhythm sections, you might have four or five players, but at Motown we usually had nine or ten, and sometimes as many as a dozen. That's why it was so powerful. You might have three guitars, two keyboards, two or three percussionists, two drums, and even two basses on one tune. We were also much tighter and much more precise than any other rhythm section around. When Robert [White, the guitar player] and I played parts in unison, we played so close and tight that a lot of times they would stop the session and say, "I can't hear the piano," or "I can't hear the guitar," because they couldn't separate us. (quoted in Slutsky 1993, 93)

In addition, the Motown rhythm section often used distinctive instrumental voicings. As Van Dyke observes: "With so many people playing chords, we all had to be very conscious of the registers we played in. . . . [T]he guitarists used to divide up the neck so that one guy would play up high, one would be in the middle, and the third guy would be down low. We'd do the same thing with the keyboards. The section sounded like one big chord voicing" (100).

As well as using large instrumental forces, H-D-H songs sometimes make particular use of dramatically contrasting instrumental textures, with sparsely orchestrated sections alternating with tutti sections. This technique is especially evident in some of their later songs for the Four Tops, such as "Reach Out" and "Standing in the Shadows of Love."

Backing vocals are present in most songs by all writers, apart from Cooke (see Table 18). Mayfield uses male voices almost exclusively, Stevenson's and H-D-H's songs most often feature female backing vocals, and Robinson's songs employ a mixture of voice types. Together with using traditional triadic backing harmonies, all writers also make extensive use of unison/octave parts. These parts often double the lead melody (e.g., "I Can't Help Myself" [H-D-H], "Come See" [Mayfield]). Sometimes the backing voices deviate slightly from the lead melody, while still supporting the lyric hook (e.g., "How Sweet It Is to Be Loved by You" [H-D-H]).

Call-response—contrapuntal patterns between lead and backing vocals—are used extensively and take a variety of forms. Backing vocals sometimes echo the lead voice, a technique favored by Robinson in particular (e.g., "I Like It Like That," "The Way You Do the Things You Do").

Sometimes backing voices complete a lyric-melodic statement initiated by the lead voice, as in H-D-H's "Come See about Me," which proceeds as follows:

Lead voice: "Smiles have all turned"
Backing voices: "to tears"

On other occasions, the backing voices sing the main lyric-melodic hook, to which the lead voice adds new material (e.g., "Heat Wave").

Given the dominant position of Motown songwriters within the black pop crossover domain, it is important to consider the distinctive aspects of the Motown studio production process. This process saw the songwriter-producers collaborate with a team of specialist session players, such as Earl Van Dyke (keyboards), James Jamerson (bass), Benny Benjamin (drums), and Robert White (guitar). Session musicians were on call for recordings with a wide range of Motown performers, and session bands developed a tightness of sound more commonly found among members of long-established groups.

The session players (often following minimal directions) would create grooves that could often become the building blocks for songs. Earl Van Dyke recalls that H-D-H would "come in with about five chords and a feel" (George 1985, 115). Riffs and feels drew on the extensive musical knowledge and experience of the session players (most of whom were skilled jazz musicians), and many Motown songs exhibit bass, drum, and keyboard parts that are highly complex and innovative for the pop mainstream at the time.[11] As well as providing a solid foundation for the songs, these parts help to provide points of interest within the repetitive framework of Motown songs. Dozier (1992) has acknowledged the importance of the contributions from the session players, observing that "a lot of the ideas wouldn't have been possible without the Funk Brothers" and that after players had filled out a basic idea given by the producers, his reaction was often "Hey, did I write that?" Since elements such as rhythmic-chordal riffs (normally involving several or all of the main instruments of the rhythm section) play such an important part in the song, the session players clearly contributed significantly to the creation of many Motown songs.

In addition to the creative input provided by the session players, Motown's songwriters were assisted by a range of innovative ideas relat-

11. For example, James Jamerson's contributions have been transcribed, discussed, and analyzed by Allan Slustky (1989). There is some dispute about "who did what and where" (Cunningham 1996, 75) in terms of certain Motown sessions. For example, famous Los Angeles–based session bassist Carole Kaye claims to have played bass on some of Motown's biggest hits (e.g.)"Reach Out, I'll Be There," "Baby Love," "My Guy" [74]).

ing to sound engineering (George 1985, 112–114). For example, Motown was one of the first studios to use "punch-ins," to run guitars and bass directly into the console, and to employ limiters and equalizers. In addition, small car radios were used to assess the quality of the sound that listeners were likely to hear.

Summary and Discussion

Rhythmic elements play a prominent role in many of the black pop crossover songs. These elements include heavily reinforced backbeats (in the Motown songs in particular), dance tempi between 120 and 139 bpm, syncopated rhythms attached to chord changes, and repeated rhythmic-chordal and rhythmic riffs—which often help define the song's structure. Sam Cooke's songs tend to incorporate more on-beat vocal delivery and rarely use rhythmic riffs or syncopated harmonic rhythms. At the other extreme are H-D-H's songs, which are permeated with structural riffs built from a wide variety of rhythmic motifs and harmonic sequences. In between these extremes are the songs by Curtis Mayfield and the other Motown writers. While incorporating all of the rhythmic elements mentioned, they use a smaller number of rhythmic and harmonic patterns and less of the complex riff structures associated with the songs of H-D-H.

It is not surprising that rhythmic elements should take prominence in black pop crossover music. The significance of rhythm within various African-American musical styles has been stressed by many authors (e.g., Shaw 1970, 180; Crawford 1977, 555; Maultsby 1990, 192–193). James Brown asserted that "Black music's basically rhythmic, it's all about Africa and dancing" (Hall 1976, 38). As already noted, however, in the early 1960s, black pop performers mostly recorded songs written and produced by white writer-producers, and the songs by these writers, although they often incorporate certain stylistic elements associated with African-American traditions, rarely reflect intimate involvement with these traditions. A focus on the subtleties of rhythm is especially lacking. In contrast, Motown, the dominant new force in black pop crossover music, supplied its performers with songs written and produced by black writer-producers who had extensive first-hand experience of black musical traditions (gospel in particular) and offered writers the opportunity to adapt aspects of these traditions to the pop mainstream. Therefore, it is not surprising that rhythmic elements were afforded a significant role in these new crossover songs.

There are, of course, many other stylistic elements common to African-

American songwriting traditions.[12] Melodic elements include the flattened third and seventh scale degrees (associated with the blues in particular), pentatonic scales, improvisation, melodic embellishment, pitch variation, melisma, varied and expressive (sometimes "raw") vocal tone, riffs, and other repetitive elements. These elements are present in varying degrees in the songs analyzed here. Melodies regularly involve pentatonic scales, melisma, and repetition (although the latter is much less evident in Sam Cooke's songs, which tend to consist of longer, more developed phrases rather than short repeated motifs). Melodic embellishment occurs frequently but varies in extent according to the particular performing artist. For example, Marvin Gaye and Levi Stubbs (lead singer of the Four Tops) use a great deal more embellishment than Diana Ross (lead singer of the Supremes).

It is impossible to determine the extent of free vocal improvisation within the crossover hits examined in this study, but one can surmise that it was limited. Compared with the often free and expressive improvisatory vocal of many blues songs and late 1960s soul songs, the vocals are often fairly constrained and only quasi-improvisatory. They regularly feature repetition of a particular embellishment, suggesting writer-producer direction rather than spontaneous improvisation. Lamont Dozier (1992) remembers, "We were meticulous about the delivery of a song." However, even H-D-H were prepared to adjust this meticulous approach at times. For example, Dozier (1992) acknowledges that when working with Marvin Gaye, "We let him do what he felt."

It is also impossible to determine the extent of writer-producer input into vocal timbre, but considering the light, sweet tone of writer-performers Cooke, Mayfield, and Robinson, as well as performing artists such as Diana Ross, it seems clear that this style of vocal tone was generally preferred by black pop crossover writer-producers (and pop audiences) to more raw, soulful timbres. Of all the writers, H-D-H show the greatest affinity for soulful timbres. For example, their songs for Levi Stubbs showcase freer, gospel-influenced vocals.

Melodic contour is notably lacking in discussions of African-American popular music, but this study indicates that the presence of flat or irreg-

12. These elements have been discussed by numerous writers. This present discussion of African-American melodic, harmonic, and formal elements draws in particular on the work of Middleton (1993, 1983), Maultsby (1979, 1983, 1990, 1992), Crawford (1977), Williams-Jones (1975), and Wilson (1974). There are also many elements that relate to aspects of performance rather than songwriting, but they are beyond the scope of this study. It should be noted, however, that a clear distinction cannot always be made. For example, the Motown writer-producers clearly had input into aspects of vocal delivery for particular performers. It should also be noted that various elements that assume prominence in African-American musical traditions are rarely exclusive to these traditions (see, e.g., Tagg 1989).

ular verse contours (and relative absence of arch contours) is a notable feature of the new 1960s crossover hit song. The only writer to use the arch contour extensively is Sam Cooke. All other writers tend to write repetitive, short melodic phrases, often combined with repeated rhythmic and harmonic patterns.

Attention has already been drawn in the literature to the presence of various harmonic elements within many African-American musical traditions. These include twelve-bar blues patterns, "static" dominant seventh chords (those used for their sound quality rather than functioning as V chords), and short repeated sequences (which often form part of repetitive grooves). These elements are also present in the black pop crossover songs of 1963–1966. In particular, short chord sequences play a prominent role in the songs of all writers. These sequences, often attached to riffs, provide chord movement without drawing attention to the actual progression itself and provide further evidence that the black pop crossover songwriters were more concerned with the overall groove than functional tonality. Similarly, the IV chord in these songs normally acts as an embellishment of the I chord, rather than supporting a strong melodic movement. Cooke alone regularly uses more ballad-style extended "functional" chord sequences.

Interestingly, none of the black pop crossover writers make much use of the most pervasive African-American harmonic formula, the twelve-bar blues progression. Of all the songs analyzed in this study, only eight examples provide a literal (or nearly literal) version of this chord sequence, and of all the performers of songs discussed here, Marvin Gaye is the only artist regularly associated with the twelve-bar blues.

There is an additional harmonic element—extended step chord progression—that regularly recurs within the black pop crossover songs but has not normally featured in discussions of African-American popular music. Although Moore (1993, 51) has asserted that, in rock music, "Stepwise moves are normally highly limited," and that "there are clear grounds for arguing that there is a *single harmonic* language for rock/pop/soul" (1992, 81), my analysis indicates that step chord movement is in fact an important aspect of the harmonic language employed within black pop crossover hits (especially those by Mayfield and H-D-H).

Aspects of song form associated with African-American musical traditions include the (normally twelve-bar) blues sequence, "musematic" repetition,[13] and call-response structures. While the twelve-bar structure,

13. Middleton (1990, 269) uses the term *musematic* to describe repetition of short musical cells (as in the case of riffs), in contrast to repetition of longer phrases, which he labels *discursive.*

as already noted, rarely appears in the black pop crossover songs, the other two elements play an extremely important role. Mayfield and the Motown songwriters often use musematic repetition (in the form of riffs) as a structural element, while H-D-H demonstrate a particular awareness of the structural possibilities of riffs, using them to help create variety in an otherwise highly repetitive framework, as well as to provide a foundation on which more free-flowing, irregular song forms can be constructed.

Call-response dialogue between lead and backing vocals is also an integral part of Motown songs. Contrapuntal interplay between these parts is a feature of (on average) four in five Motown songs (as opposed to one in two Mayfield songs and one in seven Cooke songs). Lyrics and melodies are often divided between lead and backing voices.

When considered as a whole, the pattern of musical characteristics identified in the songs analyzed confirms that, of the various African-American musical traditions, gospel music had the most profound influence on the creation of the new black pop crossover sound. Maultsby (1990, 202) stresses the importance of the gospel tradition, which, "for more than eighty years . . . has preserved and transmitted the aesthetic concepts fundamental to music-making in Africa and African-derived cultures." Gospel music typically played an integral role in the development of the musical sensibilities of black musicians. Dozier (1992), for example, notes of the Motown writers and performers, "We were all from the gospel church."

It is not surprising, then, that gospel elements found a place in pop songs by black songwriters. These elements have been the subject of considerable research and, in some cases, debate. Crawford (1977) quotes from sworn court witness statements by gospel practitioners, publishers, and others attempting to define the musical and lyrical elements of gospel. Gospel is described as "a vehicle to entertainment and to spirituality" and is said to differ from hymns because "it deals with the ordinary human emotions" (555). Other elements include "characteristic form of verse . . . and chorus. . . . The tempo of these gospel songs is usually fast as opposed to a slower tempo for the traditional hymns. The rhythm, the rhythmic element of these gospel songs is almost a predominant one." Syncopation is "a very characteristic idiom" while flattened notes are said to give the music "an effect that you will find very much in blues songs" (555).

Other writers identified additional musical characteristics common to gospel, such as the use of call-response, melismatic melodies, varied and expressive vocal tone, vocal dexterity, melodic variation, embellishment and improvisation, repetition, percussive playing techniques, handclap-

ping and foot tapping, and the importance of instruments such as piano and tambourine.[14] Boyer (1992, 285) identifies the vamp as a "short musical phrase of two, four, or eight measures that is repeated over and over" and describes it as "the most important stylistic element in contemporary gospel." Some of these features are also common to a range of African-American musical styles, and their existence in the black pop crossover songs has already been discussed. However, many of the most prominent features of the pop crossover hits analyzed in this study are quite specifically related to the gospel tradition.

Looking first at musical form, one can clearly see gospel elements. Boyer (1992, 280) discusses the predominance of verse-chorus forms in the gospel repertoire (with the addition of an occasional repeated refrain AAA form) and describes the different melodic styles normally applied to these song sections. The verse "with its complex melodic line" is contrasted to the chorus, which consists of "a genuine sing-along refrain that the marginally sophisticated gospel ear can pick up after one hearing." This scheme is ideally suited to the call-response between preacher/soloist (singing the verse) and congregation (singing the chorus). These verse-chorus forms dominate the black pop crossover songs and are increasingly evident in the songs by Mayfield, Robinson, and H-D-H. The song forms used by the latter writers occur in exactly the type of profile identified by Boyer, with verse-chorus forms dominating, an occasional AAA form, and the absence of AABA forms. In addition, many black pop crossover songs use the type of short, sing-along chorus identified by Boyer as typical of the gospel song. H-D-H are again at the forefront of this stylistic development within the popular mainstream, writing by far the greatest number of songs of this type. A large number of their songs also feature contrasting verse and chorus melodies similar to those described by Boyer.

Complementing the gospel nature of many of those songs featuring "sing-along" choruses are lyrics that consist of a few memorable catchwords. These are designed to be repeated extensively and serve, like their gospel counterparts, both to offer entertainment and to deal with normal human emotions. H-D-H lyrics, in particular, often sound like a secularized gospel plea or statement of joy (e.g., "Baby I Need Your Lovin'," "How Sweet It Is to Be Loved by You").[15] The use of backing voices to

14. The most comprehensive overview of gospel practice is Reagon's (1992) *We'll Understand It Better By and By*, in which a number of gospel scholars discuss aspects of gospel history and musical style. Maultsby's (1992) article on the impact of gospel in the secular arena is particularly informative, as is Boyer's (1992) detailed analysis of the music of Roberta Martin. Other useful sources of information on gospel music include Hillsman (1990), Heilbut (1985), Broughton (1985), and Williams-Jones (1975).

15. Southern (1984, 29) observes the "advisory or moralizing" nature of Motown songs.

reinforce important lyric/melodic licks also helps create a sense of communal, congregational involvement. This technique is applied most frequently by Mayfield and H-D-H, both for short choruses and key words within verses. At times, the backing vocals deviate slightly from the lead melody—singing notes of different pitch and/or rhythmic duration to create the effect of congregational singing.

Scale choices in the black crossover melodies also have much in common with the spiritual and gospel repertoire. Maultsby's (1975, 328–332) analysis of the scale types present in one hundred spirituals reveals the predominance of major hexatonic and major pentatonic scales and the virtual absence of minor pentatonic and mixolydian scales. Boyer's (1992, 275–286) analysis of gospel songs by Roberta Martin reveals the prevalence of ionian and major pentatonic scales and a similar avoidance of minor pentatonic and mixolydian scales, although he notes that "any great folk singer, especially a gospel singer, will alternately brighten or darken a third or a seventh" (280). The songs of the black pop crossover writers demonstrate a similar profile of scale usage,[16] with a clear predominance of major pentatonic and major hexatonic scales and limited use of minor pentatonics and mixolydian scales. Blues inflections are most often employed by H-D-H and Stevenson.

The importance of riffs in the music of Mayfield and the Motown writers bears direct comparison with the importance of the vamp in gospel music. In addition, the Motown songs in particular regularly use instruments and other sounds (such as the tambourine, piano, and handclaps or finger snaps) with specific gospel associations. Maultsby (1992, 31) notes the important contributions made by Roberta Martin and Ray Charles in elevating the function of the piano in gospel and gospel-derived music "from that of background for vocals" to an integral part of the performance. The Motown songwriters, ably assisted by session pianists such as Earl Van Dyke, continued this process.

Conclusion

Analysis of the black pop crossover songs demonstrates that Curtis Mayfield and the Motown writers injected numerous gospel elements into the mainstream charts. This article supports Reed's (2003, 111) assertion that "the ascendancy of Curtis Mayfield" was a "potent example of

Maultsby (1983, 55) notes, however, that specific social comment is rare in songs by black-writers prior to the era of soul (1965–1969).

16. The only dissimilarity relates to the greater presence of complete major scales in the gospel songs of Martin (see Boyer 1992, 280).

the re-churchification of black secular sound" and demonstrates that the Motown writers (especially H-D-H, the most successful and gospel-oriented of all the writers) continued this process to the point that gospel-infused music became one of the dominant sounds of the early 1960s pop mainstream. Although gospel-influenced music had previously crossed over from the sacred to secular domain (through artists such as Ray Charles and Little Richard), the extent of that crossover had been limited. The new composers showed beyond doubt that black songwriters could achieve substantial pop-chart success by adapting the musical language of gospel to create gospel-nuanced pop hits.

This article also supports the idea that Sam Cooke is a transitional figure in terms of the movement of gospel into the pop mainstream. Cooke's crossover success undoubtedly represented a major breakthrough for black musicians. However, he tended to write what Guralnick (1991, 37) describes as "lightweight but durable pop material" for mainstream audiences. And, as shown here, his U.S. Top Forty hits between 1963 and 1966 are minimally imbued with the musical language of gospel. Reed (2003, 105) argues that in the late 1950s (when Cooke's crossover success began), black artists like Cooke and the Platters deliberately avoided "textual nuances that might conjure up the image of spirit possession" in order to "convey an image of sophistication and conformity to mainstream norms." Shaw (1970, 85) suggests that Cooke's restraint was effective in that it "moved soul singers to strive for something beyond surface values, beyond the vocal exhibitionism of gospel possession."

Not all of the songs by Mayfield and the Motown writers display obvious links to gospel tradition. Many early Motown songs in particular (e.g., Robinson's "My Guy," "You've Really Got a Hold on Me") incorporate teen-romance lyrics, shuffle rhythms, arch melodic contours and functional harmony—elements more readily associated with the songs by the 1960s Brill Building writer-producers than gospel traditions (Fitzgerald 1995b). Even H-D-H first entered the U.S. Top Forty charts in 1963 with a typical girl-group pop song ("Come and Get These Memories"). Neither is the so-called Motown sound a completely consistent entity. For example, H-D-H increasingly prefer declamatory, rhythmic melodies, allied to anguished lyrics, whereas Robinson's output is notable for sweet melodies and happy, positive lyrics. Robinson is also rightly regarded as one of the most poetic pop lyricists of all time;[17] his songs use devices such as simile, metaphor, and parallel or paradoxical statements to create distinctive and evocative images. Motown perform-

17. Legend has it that Bob Dylan once referred to Robinson as America's "greatest living poet."

ers often used a mixture of material from both H-D-H and Robinson (and other writers) and in so doing built song repertoires with a considerable amount of textual and musical variety.

The new crossover music is clearly characterized overall by a demonstrable shift in focus toward specific gospel techniques, rhythmic elements, and rhythm-based structures. Few white songwriters of the day used rhythm as a central element or in a structural way (Fitzgerald, 1996); in fact, they typically treated rhythm as an element of relatively minor importance.[18] The black songwriters discussed in this article should therefore be considered significant innovators in the history of popular songwriting, and their songs can be seen to have pointed the way to the rhythmic intensity of late 1960s–early 1970s black music by songwriters such as James Brown and Norman Whitfield.[19] Maintaining and extending their pop chart success during the height of the British Invasion,[20] while many of the previously dominant white writer-producers struggled to compete with bands that wrote their own songs,[21] black songwriters were able to establish a presence as prominent members of a new generation of 1960s pop songwriters.

18. Leading Brill Building songwriter Jeff Barry has described the songwriting process (with partner Ellie Greenwich) as follows: "[B]asically there were three parts to the song—the words, the melody that the words were hung on, and the chord bed" (cited in Smith 1990, 144). Rhythm does not rate a mention in his account.

19. James Brown had already created rhythmically oriented pop songs, such as "I Got You (I Feel Good)" (1965), and his subsequent series of hits maintained this rhythmic focus. Norman Whitfield moved Motown toward the rhythmic funk of songs such as "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone" (recording by the Temptations in 1972).

20. The British Invasion is commonly seen to have begun in 1964 with the Beatles' assault on the U.S. pop charts—and continuing with the success of other British bands such as the Kinks and Rolling Stones.

21. For example, Goffin/King's U.S. Top Forty hits numbered eight (1963), four (1964), one (1965), and two (1966). See Fitzgerald (1997) for additional chart analysis demonstrating the declining chart success of leading Brill Building writers.

DISCOGRAPHY

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Butler, Jerry. Need to belong. Vee-Jay 567 (1963).
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———. Another Saturday night. RCA 8164 (1963).
———. Cousin of mine. RCA 8426 (1964).
———. Good news. RCA 8229 (1964).
———. Good times. RCA 8368 (1964).
———. Shake. RCA 8486 (1965).
———. Sugar dumpling. RCA 8631 (1965).
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———. Baby I need your lovin'. Motown 1062 (1964).
———. I can't help myself. Motown 1076 (1965).
———. It's the same old song. Motown 1081 (1965).
———. Reach out I'll be there. Motown 1098 (1966).
———. Shake me, wake me (when it's over). Motown 1090 (1966).
———. Something about you. Motown 1084 (1965).
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———. Baby don't you do it. Tamla 54122 (1965).
———. Can I get a witness. Tamla 54087 (1963).
———. Hitch hike. Tamla 54075 (1963).
———. How sweet it is to be loved by you. Tamla 54107 (1964).
———. I'll be doggone. Tamla 54112 (1964).
———. One more heartache. Tamla 54129 (1966).
———. Pride and joy. Tamla 54079 (1963).
———. You're a wonderful one. Tamla 54093 (1964).
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———. It's all right. ABC-Paramount 10487 (1963).
———. Keep on pushing. ABC-Paramount 10554 (1964).
———. People get ready. ABC-Paramount 10622 (1965).
———. Talking about my baby. ABC-Paramount 10511 (1964).
———. You must believe me. ABC-Paramount 10581 (1964).
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———. The monkey time. Okeh 7175 (1963).
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———. Dancing in the street. Gordy (1964).
———. Heat wave. Gordy 7022 (1963).
———. I'm ready for love. Gordy 7056 (1966).

———. My baby loves me. Gordy 7048 (1966).
———. Nowhere to run. Gordy 7039 (1965).
———. Quicksand. Gordy 7025 (1963).
———. Wild one. Gordy 7036 (1964).
———. You've been in love too long. Gordy 7045 (1965).
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———. (Come round here) I'm the one you need. Tamla 54140 (1966).
———. Going to a go-go. Tamla 54127 (1966).
———. I gotta dance to keep from cryin'. Tamla 54089 (1964).
———. I like it like that. Tamla 54098 (1964).
———. Mickey's monkey. Tamla 54083 (1963).
———. My girl has gone. Tamla 54123 (1965).
———. Ooo baby baby. Tamla 54113 (1965).
———. That's what love is made of. Tamla 54102 (1964).
———. The tracks of my tears. Tamla 54118 (1965).
———. You've really got a hold on me. Tamla 54073 (1963).
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———. Baby love. Motown 1066 (1964).
———. Come see about me. Motown 1068 (1964).
———. I hear a symphony. Motown 1083 (1965).
———. Love is like an itching in my heart. Motown 1094 (1966).
———. My world is empty wihtout you. Motown 1089 (1966).
———. Nothing but heartaches. Motown 1080 (1965).
———. Stop in the name of love. Motown 1074 (1965).
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———. Where did our love go. Motown 1060 (1964).
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———. You keep me hangin' on. Motown 1101 (1966).
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